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SUBJECT: NEW SRSG AD MELKERT ADDRESSES THE COUNCIL ON  
IRAQ/UNAMI

¶1. (U) Summary: In his first address August 5 to the Security Council as Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) to Iraq, Ad Melkert emphasized the optimism and energy in Iraq and drawing upon his UNDP background, emphasized the importance of economic and social reforms in Iraq. His address was well-received by Council members, who focused on disputed internal boundaries, upcoming elections and national unity as key priorities in Iraq in the coming months. Iraqi PR Bayati also addressed the Council, and provided a comprehensive update on the Iraqi government's economic, political and foreign relations initiatives. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Although he refrained from commenting extensively on Iraq's political situation because he was not yet working in Iraq, Melkert used the occasion of the Council meeting to provide an overview of his priorities as SRSG and head of the UN Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI). He began by saying "this is not only an unparalleled moment of opportunity, but also one of great sensitivity. There are many factors, some internal, some external, that could still tip the scale." Melkert declared that "the time has come to place economic and social conditions up front." He said UNAMI would work more closely with the IMF and the World Bank, and would look to "invest in the productivity and social cohesion of the country as a whole." Although his emphasis on economic and social priorities marked a departure from the vision of ex-SRSG Staffan de Mistura, Melkert's outline of UNAMI priorities in the near-term was quite similar. UNAMI would continue to assist the Independent High Electoral Commission in preparing for upcoming elections and would continue its work on internal disputed boundaries and national reconciliation.

¶3. (SBU) In closed consultation following his intervention, Melkert also mentioned the importance of the regional dimension, as well as finding an appropriate follow-on mechanism to the Iraq Compact that clearly put the Government of Iraq in the lead. UN deputy director for Middle East issues Jehangir Khan told D/POL Counselor on August 5 that Melkert was very interested in the P3/UN initiative to achieve progress on Iraq/Kuwait issues, and said this would be one of his highest priorities when he arrives in Baghdad at the end of August.

¶4. (U) Iraqi PR Bayati also briefed the Council. He painted a positive picture, and described in detail the political, economic and diplomatic initiatives of the Iraqi government. He said the "withdrawal of United States forces from Iraqi cities initiates a new stage in Iraqi-United States relations, which will focus on economic, cultural and social areas rather than solely on political and security issues..."

He noted progress in the return of refugees and in reconstruction. After listing the recent visits of Foreign Ministers to Iraq, Bayati reviewed FM Zebari's and PM Maliki's recent visit to New York, in which both stressed that "Iraq no longer constitutes a threat to international peace and security."

¶5. (U) Council members highlighted the issues of disputed internal boundaries, upcoming elections and national unity as particularly important in the coming months. Ambassador Rice thanked Melkert for his impressive briefing so early in his

tenure, and said his economic and development background would be an important asset for UNAMI. She emphasized that UNAMI's role would be particularly important over the next year in assisting Iraq on internal boundaries, elections and the sustainable and voluntary reintegration of Iraqi refugees and IDPs. Mexico, Austria and Costa Rica raised the importance of human rights and protection of children in armed conflict, and reiterated their call for Iraq to impose a moratorium on the death penalty. Russia, the UK and France said UNAMI's attention to elections and disputed boundaries would be particularly important in the coming year. China agreed, and noted the importance of adopting a comprehensive hydrocarbon law. Libya praised the withdrawal of U.S. troops but said that only the complete withdrawal of U.S. troops would remove "any justification for violence." Turkey gave a long statement that 1) criticized the KRG's draft constitution and expressed concern over the disputed internal boundaries process, including Kirkuk; 2) complained that Arab-Kurdish tension was on the rise; 3) criticized the Iraqi government for failing to take concrete steps to "clamp down" on the PKK; and 4) noted that Turkey was willing to engage in dialogue about water resources, but "one side cannot just ask for more water."

RICE